Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 – 29 (canceled).

Claim 30 (previously presented): An apparatus for producing a composite nonwoven fabric, comprising:

a) an extruder having a plurality of die heads for extruding heated continuous filaments,

b) a series of chilled rollers comprising a first chilled roller and a second chilled roller, the first chilled roller being positioned vertically below the extruder so that the extruded heated continuous filaments flow directly to the first chilled roller in a canted direction that is tangent to the surface of the first chilled roller and the second chilled roller being positioned so that the extruded continuous filaments flow directly from the first chilled roller to the second chilled roller, wherein the series of chilled rollers are enclosed within a sealed tower structure that provides conditioned air to the enclosed series of chilled rollers,

c) a nip comprising at least two nip rollers, said nip being positioned vertically with respect to the first chilled roller in order to receive said heated continuous filaments,

d) a roller mechanism for providing a first web to said nip to be laminated with the continuous filaments so as to form a continuous filament laminate, and

e) a mechanism for carrying the continuous filament laminate away from the nip.

Claim 31 (new): A method for producing a composite nonwoven fabric in a vertical plane, comprising:

a) providing an extruder having a plurality of die heads, a vertically-arranged series of first and second chilled rollers, and a set of nip rollers, the extruder being located above the vertically-arranged series of first and second chilled rollers, the first chilled roller being positioned vertically below the extruder so that extruded filaments from the extruder flow directly to the first chilled roller, the second chilled roller being positioned vertically below the first chilled roller and located before the set of nip rollers so that the extruded continuous filaments flow directly from the first chilled roller to the second chilled roller and then directly to a nip formed by the set of nip rollers,

b) extruding heated continuous filaments from the die heads of the extruder directly to the first chilled roller, wherein the extruder is further configured to provide the continuous filaments to the first chilled roller in a canted direction that is tangent to the surface of the first chilled roller,

c) conveying the continuous filaments directly from the first chilled roller to the second chilled roller,

d) quenching and stretching simultaneously the continuous filaments to form stretched continuous filaments,

e) conveying the stretched continuous filaments directly from the second chilled roller to the nip,

f) providing at least one nonwoven web,

g) applying an adhesive on the surface of the one nonwoven web and then providing said one nonwoven web to the nip, and

h) laminating the stretched continuous filaments with the nonwoven web in the nip to form a composite nonwoven fabric.

Claim 32 (new): The method of claim 31 wherein the continuous filaments are elasticized.

Claim 33 (new): The method of claim 31 wherein the composite nonwoven fabric is elasticized.

Claim 34 (new): The method of claim 31 wherein the continuous filaments move vertically downward approximately in line with the lamination process.

Claim 35 (new): The method of claim 31 wherein upon breakage of a continuous filament, the filament is automatically re-threaded.

Claim 36 (new): The method of claim 31 comprising the further step of relaxing said composite nonwoven fabric by a take-up roll running at a differential speed.

Claim 37 (new): The method of claim 31 comprising the further step of providing a second nonwoven web and laminating the second nonwoven web to the continuous filaments in the nip.

Claim 38 (new): The method of claim 37 comprising the further step of applying an adhesive on the surface of the second nonwoven web prior to laminating the second nonwoven web at the nip.

Claim 39 (new): The method of claim 31 wherein the speed ratio of the nip rolls relative to the first chilled roller can be varied.

Claim 40 (new): The method of claim 39 wherein the speed ratio of the nip rolls relative to the first chilled roller is between about 2:1 and about 8:1.

Claim 41 (new): The method of claim 39 wherein the speed ratio of the nip rolls relative to the first chilled roller is between about 4:1 and about 6:1.

Claim 42 (new): A method for producing a composite nonwoven fabric in a vertical plane, comprising:

a) vertically extruding heated continuous filaments from die heads of an extruder to a conveying roller that is chilled and positioned vertically below the extruder so that extruded filaments from the extruder flow directly to the conveying roller in a canted direction that is tangent to the surface of the conveying roller;

b) quenching and stretching simultaneously the continuous filaments on the chilled conveying roller,

c) conveying the stretched continuous filaments directly from the conveying roller in a downward direction to a nip comprising nip rollers,

d) providing at least one nonwoven web to the nip,

e) laminating the stretched continuous filaments with the nonwoven web in the nip to form a composite nonwoven fabric, and

f) relaxing the composite nonwoven fabric.

Claim 43 (new): The method of claim 42 comprising the further step of providing a second nonwoven web to the nip and laminating the continuous filaments with the one nonwoven web and the second nonwoven web in the nip to form a composite nonwoven fabric.

Claim 44 (new): The method of claim 42 wherein an adhesive is applied to the nonwoven web prior to providing the web to the nip.

Claim 45 (new): The method of claim 42 wherein said adhesive is sprayed on said nonwoven web.

Claim 46 (new): The method of claim 44 wherein an adhesive is applied to the second nonwoven web prior to providing the second nonwoven web to the nip.

Claim 47 (new): An apparatus for producing a composite nonwoven fabric, comprising:

a) an extruder having a plurality of die heads for extruding heated continuous filaments,

b) a vertically-arranged series of first and second chilled rollers, wherein the first chilled roller is positioned vertically below the extruder so that extruded filaments from the extruder flow directly to the first chilled roller in a canted direction that is tangent to the surface of the first chilled roller and the second chilled roller is positioned vertically below the first chilled roller so that the extruded continuous filaments flow directly from the first chilled roller to the second chilled roller,

c) a nip comprising at least two nip rollers, said nip being positioned vertically with respect to the first chilled roller in order to receive the heated continuous filaments directly from the second chilled roller,

d) a roller mechanism for providing a first web to said nip to be laminated with the continuous filaments so as to form a continuous filament laminate, and

e) a mechanism for carrying the continuous filament laminate away from the nip.